INCOMPLETE

CO-OP CITY DRAFT 4/72

R. A. Olmsted

RAPID TRANSIT TO CO-OP CITY

A RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

Co-op City has some 15,000 dwelling units and a reputed population of about 50,000. (This should be checked as it seems that the population estimates have been based on multiplying the number of D.U.'s by an assumed family size.) For the purposes of this discussion, it is assumed that the total population is 50,000 and each section is equal (not necessarily so, however), each having a population of 10,000. With this assumption, 80% of the population is housed in the four sections north of Bartow Ave, and only 20% in Section 5 adjacent to the New Haven tracks.

Before suggesting route and station locations, it would be well to examine the land use pattern of Co-op City as actually built. Co-op City is divided into five sections of which four are contiguous with each other north of Bartow Ave. The fifth section, Section 5, lies adjacent to the NHRR tracks east of the Hutchinson River Parkway and is remote from the first four sections. Accordingly, a single transit station cannot serve all of Co-op City without feeder bus transportation.

A land use plan of Co-op City is shown on attached Fig. 1. As can be seen on the plan, the natural centers of activity are the three local shopping centers: The Dreiser Loop center which serves Sections 1 & 2; the Asch Loop center which serves Sections 3 & 4; and the Einstein Loop center which serves Section 5. A walking reconnaissance of Co-op City confirms the validity of a proposal that the best locations for rapid transit stations are adjacent to these shopping centers. These are where the residents congregate, do their shopping and engage in their community activities. The busiest bus stops are at the shopping centers. Accordingly, it is not only natural, but also compatible land use policy to locate transit stations adjacent to the shopping centers and away from areas which are predominantly residential.

There is no internal street system which lends itself to the construction of a subway line within Co-op City proper. This fact, coupled with utility, subsurface and soil problems, more or less precludes penetration of Co-op City itself by a new rapid transit route. Therefore, new rapid transit stations would best be located on the perimeter of the housing complex.

There are, however, numerous pathways in Co-op City which facilitate free pedestrian circulation through the development to and from potential transit station sites.

~~Other~~ Non-residential land uses are eight scattered garage structures, the heating plant and the Northeast Bronx Educational Park. The Educational Park, now nearing completion, will have a new High School, two Intermediate Schools and two Elementary Schools and, accordingly, will generate transit ridership by students, teachers and staff. A station within walking distance of the Educational Park would be desirable.

The large triangular site separating Sections 1-4 and Section 5, bounded by Bartow Ave, the Hutchinson River Parkway, and Baychester Ave (the actual site of the former "Freedomland") is currently vacant and undeveloped. This site was not ceded to Co-op City but was retained by a developer who plans to erect a large scale commercial development. An early plan for "Baychester Plaza", apparently now defunct, called for the construction of a number of tall office buildings (40-50 stories), department stores, movie theaters, motels, etc. Because of this proposal, deed restrictions limited shopping centers within Co-op City to local centers only to avoid competition. While it is not clear at the moment as to what the details of developing this site will be, it probably can be assumed that a large scale commercial development of some sort will be built which would generate traffic for a new transit extension. Indeed, a real large scale development may require a rapid transit extension to be feasible.

Co-op City Rapid Transit Extension - Alternative Possibilities

There are several conceivable rapid transit extensions to Co-op City that appear feasible to build and operate. Among them are:

Second Ave Subway Extensions

1. Extension of the Pelham Line
2. Branch of the Dyre Ave Line
3. Extension along the New Haven RR

Other Extensions

4. Concourse Line Extension

Some of these have been studied in varying degree in the past. The first three alternatives could be operated as an extension of Second Ave subway service to the Bronx; the fourth would be an extension of the "D" train service. Another concept, once considered, was a shuttle device of some sort such as a Westinghouse Transit Expressway between the Pelham Bay Park and the Dyre Ave terminal stations. Some of these proposals were initially reviewed in a 1967 study of transportation in the Northeast Bronx by the Transit Authority.

Extension of Pelham Line. This alternative was shown in MTA's 1968 report, "A Program for Action" as an example of extending service to Co-op City. This alternative is no longer recommended because 1.) it would require the construction of an elevated line in Pelham Bay Park (which would violate the Rapid Transit Law and be environmentally unacceptable) and along Boller Ave, 2.) service would be slower than other alternatives, and 3.) the Co-op City traffic would overload the Pelham Line. (An alternative alignment adjacent to the New England Thruway and Baychester Ave, however, would ameliorate the first objection to some degree.)

Branch of the Dyre Ave Line. The construction of a branch of the Dyre Ave line into Co-op City along some Avenue such as Burke Ave has been suggested. Other possible avenues are Adee Ave, Tillotson Ave, Bartow Ave, etc. To be environmentally acceptable, such a branch probably should be constructed underground in subways. Because of the difficulties of penetrating Co-op City with a subway line previously mentioned, the terminal station most likely would be at the edge of the development. A branch along Burke Ave, for example, would be one-half mile to one mile in length and might terminate at a station under the New England Thruway at Burke Ave - Donizetti Place.

A principal objection to a branch of the Dyre Ave line is operational. Two services would have to be operated, one to Dyre Ave, the other to Co-op City. Since during periods of light traffic (most of the time) there would be insufficient traffic demand to justify operation of two services, one would probably operate as a shuttle, a kind of service which makes no one happy; or alternatively, one service would be shut down. Moreover, no great improvement in accessibility is achieved. At great construction and operating expense, a new station ~~is~~ would be provided only 1/3rd mile closer to Co-op City (Burke Ave alternative).

An option worthy of some study is to let the IRT continue to provide local service to Dyre Ave, as it does now, and let the new 2 Ave service operate express service on the 4-track Dyre Ave line to the Co-op City branch terminal.

Extension Along the New Haven Railroad. A rapid transit extension to Co-op City would most likely be operated as a branch of the Second Avenue subway from a grade-separated junction with Route 132-B near E. 174th Street. It would provide a good, high-speed route to Co-op City and be much faster than an extension of the Pelham Bay Line. Additional service would be provided to Parkchester and the Bronx hospital complex, thus relieving the Pelham Bay line of some of its overcrowding.

Some of the problems associated with the NH routing are:

- location of intermediate stations
- location of terminal station(s) to best serve Co-op City
- availability of one-half of the 6-track NHRR R.O.W.
- disposition of an industrial siding to Con Ed
- storage
- sufficient traffic usage

Intermediate Stations. Specific locations for two intermediate stations, one at Unionport Road - Parkchester West, the other at Morris Park Ave - East Bronx Hospital Center, are suggested. The possibility of another station, either at Bronxdale Ave or Williamsbridge Road (Bx-8 bus) might be investigated.

The Unionport Road - Parkchester West station would be located north of the Unionport Road overpass approximately at the location of the long abandoned Van Nest station (the NHRR once had local passenger service on this line). A problem to be solved is how to provide convenient access to Parkchester which lies on the far side of Tremont Ave, a heavily traveled, unattractive thoroughfare. A good pedestrian crossing of Tremont Ave should be provided to attract passengers to the new route from the Pelham Bay line. Both an overpass and underpass should be investigated. Visual observation at the site suggests that an attractive, enclosed pedestrian overpass ("skywalk" in modern planning jargon) is the more feasible because of clearance requirements with respect to the railroad.

The station would draw riders from Parkchester, the surrounding low density community, and the Bx-13 bus.

The Morris Park Avenue - East Bronx Hospital Center station would serve the vast and growing hospital complex in this area. The need for the station is mostly social, as is the case with 96th Street on Second Ave, as traffic volumes probably won't be too large. The hospitals in question are:

- Albert Einstein Medical School (Yeshiva University)
- Abraham Jacobi Hospital (Bronx Municipal Hospital Center)
- Bronx State Hospital

The station would serve visitors, students, staff and others. A detailed survey should be undertaken to measure the activity at the several hospitals to determine their transportation requirements. The Bx-26 bus terminates here and the Bx-9 bus passes by. Both would provide some feeder traffic.

A visual inspection of the area suggests that the station might best be located opposite the end of Morris Park Ave which is more centrally located among the hospitals than Eastchester Road. Morris Park Ave itself would have to be completed and paved and the activities encroaching on its right-of-way removed. Loomis and Bassett Aves should also be paved to provide proper access to the station for cars, buses and pedestrians. An enclosed pedestrian overpass is suggested over the NHRR to provide access to the Bronx State Hospital.

The Unionport Road and Morris Park Ave stations would be about 1.3 miles apart. If an intermediate station is deemed desirable, Bronxdale Ave and Williamsbridge Road are candidates. Bronxdale Ave is near the northwest corner of Parkchester and could draw some traffic from that community. Williamsbridge Road could intercept some traffic now going to the busy Westchester Square station of the Pelham Bay Line via the Bx-8 bus. Neither station would likely be especially busy and if there is a preference, Williamsbridge Road would be the preference.

Three suggested alternatives for a Co-op City Terminal are:

1. An on-line terminal station at Erskine Place and Hunter Ave opposite one of Section 5's garages.

2. A spur via Boller Ave, partly in subway, to a terminal at Bartow Ave opposite the Asch Loop shopping center with an intermediate station at the Hutchinson River Parkway.

3. A spur, partly underground, along the west side

of the Hutchinson River Parkway and the south side of Bartow Ave to a terminal opposite the Asch Loop shopping center with an intermediate station opposite the Einstein Loop shopper center.

The first scheme, an on-line terminal station, would, of course, be cheapest. On the other hand, this scheme is the least effective of the three. Eighty percent of Co-op City (Sections 1-4) would be no closer to rapid transit than they are now as the existing Baychester Ave station of the Dyre Ave line is nearer these sections than the New Haven line. Indeed, some buildings would still be nearly 1½ miles away (as the crow flies) from the "Co-op City Terminal". Only Section 5 would be within walking distance of the terminal. Accordingly, a feeder bus system would be needed to serve sections 1-4. Such a service could probably be developed with loading and unloading on the south side of Erskine Place. On the other hand, this kind of bus service could just as well feed nearby stations on the Dyre Ave line which will have much better service following the completion of the Second Ave subway without the need to construct a new branch along the NH. Unless subsidized by Co-op City, a double fare would still be required. Accordingly, this alternative, as stated before, does not seem to be a good solution to Co-op City's transit needs.

These inadequacies can be overcome by building a spur to serve both Section 5 and the main site containing Sections 1-4 so that most residents would be able to walk to a station.

The Boller Ave spur would be built in a subway under Boller Ave, cross under the Hutchinson River Parkway and extend across the vacant Freedomland site to a terminal station opposite the Asch Loop shopping center.

Due to the high cost of subway construction in poor, wet soils, it is suggested that the route across the vacant Freedomland site, including the terminal station, be constructed at grade and that any future commercial development of this site be built around the transit facility. A grade separated pedestrian crossing of Bartow Ave (probably an overpass) is suggested to avoid pedestrian interference with vehicular traffic one one of the few main roads entering Co-op City.

An intermediate station would straddle and be constructed under the Hutchinson River Parkway. This station would be double-ended, the south end serving Section 5 and the adjacent community, and the north end serving the possible future commercial development on the Freedomland site.

A disadvantage of the Boller Ave spur is that it would cause severe damage to an existing residential community which long pre-dates Co-op City.

The Hutchinson River Parkway spur would remain entirely west of the Parkway and not cause damage to the Boller Ave community. Upon leaving the New Haven R.O.W. it would pass under the New England Thruway interchange and then follow an at-grade alignment generally parallel to the west side of the Parkway and the south side of Bartow Ave. The south portal of the interchange undercrossing would be adjacent to the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. School for Children.

The at-grade terminal station would be opposite the Asch Loop shopping center. A control building would be built over the terminal station and an enclosed pedestrian overpass would cross over Bartow Ave to a landing in a part of the shopping center which is still vacant. The overpass is needed to eliminate conflict between heavy pedestrian flow to the terminal and heavy vehicular traffic.

An intermediate, at-grade station would be built opposite the Einstein Loop garage, shopping center and elementary school. A control building would be built over the station and an enclosed pedestrian overpass would be built over the Hutchinson River Parkway to Section 5. Both stations would also serve any possible commercial development on the Freedomland site.

The construction is recommended at-grade to avoid the unnecessary high cost of subway construction. An easement would be retained and future commercial development could be built around the transit facilities in effect creating a subway.

Concourse Line Extension. When the Concourse subway line was opened in 1933, it was planned to extend the line to the Northeast Bronx via Burke Ave and the vicinity of Eastchester Road. The tracks now end at Webster Ave, about a train length beyond the 205th Street terminal station. It was planned to extend the line over Bronx Park on the lower level of a viaduct proposed to connect E. 205th Street and Burke Ave. It is highly unlikely, however, that this viaduct will ever be built. Among other tings, its construction across open parkland today would be considered environmentally unacceptable. Moreover, the traffic need is not evident, and if anything, the wrong streets would be connected; it would be more logical to extend E. 204th Street, a trafficked commercial street, across the park than E. 205th Street.

Accordingly, an extension of the Concourse line across the park would require a change in profile of both the existing construction and planned extension to pass beneath the park, the Bronx River and the Harlem Division of the Penn Central RR. This would require lowering the invert of the existing tail tracks under operation starting at the east end of the 205th Street station. While difficult, this sort of thing can be and has been done before.

The 1968 MTA plan, "A Program for Action", calls for the extension of the Concourse Line across the park to a transfer station with the White Plains Road Line in order to better integrate the transit services in the Bronx and to improve accessibility to the northeast Bronx. The proposal is also included in the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission's updated master plan for public transit (April 1972), "Regional Transit 1990 This short extension (about 3/4 of a mile) could be the first step of the extension of the Concourse Line across the entire Northeast Bronx to a logical terminal at Co-op City.

The historical route across the Bronx would be entirely via Burke Ave. This route is not recommended to reach Co-op City.

One of the objectives of a crosstown subway across the northern Bronx would be to integrate the Borough's transportation system and make it easier to travel between points within the Bronx. A transfer station at Burke Avenue and White Plains Road, for example, meets this objective. The historical Burke Ave route, however, crosses the Dyre Ave bus between two stations so that there would be no opportunity for transfer between these two lines. Indeed, the Burke Ave alignment was selected

in the late 1920's or early 1930's long before the City acquired the Dyre Ave line from the defunct NY W&BRR.

It is recommended instead that the Concourse extension follow Burke Ave, Gun Hill Road and Bartow Ave to Co-op City. This routing would have two important advantages:

1. A transfer station with the Dyre Ave line at Gun Hill Road is possible

2. It enters Co-op City at a better location opposite the Asch Loop shopping center.

The line could terminate at Bartow and Baychester Aves (opposite Asch Loop) or continue to a point opposite the Einstein Loop shopping center.

There would be three intermediate stations, as follows:

- White Plains Road (Transfer to IRT)
- Boston Road
- Gun Hill Road (Transfer to 2 Ave-Dyre Ave Line)

The extension of the Concourse Line to Co-op City is probably the most expensive of the alternatives. On the other hand, the benefits to the Bronx (not only just Co-op City) might be greatest. A good crosstown linkage would be available connecting the northeast and west Bronx. Co-op City residents, for example, would have good access to the Fordham Road shopping area and other important Bronx destinations. Transfer opportunities with other lines would tie together at least some of the Bronx rapid transit lines into an integrated network, overcoming to some extent the disadvantages of the radial pattern of the existing Bronx lines. A larger number of Bronx destinations could then be reached by means of the subway system.

CO-OP CITY LAND USE PLAN

Residential
Shopping/Comm
Garage
Educational

N

1000 FEET

1" = 1000' ±

Freedomland Site
(Vacant)

N.E. BRONX EDUCATIONAL PARK

SHOPPING CENTER

LEGEND

DWELLINGS

26 STORY

24 STORY

33 STORY

3 STORY

GARAGE

FIGURE # 1

CO-OP CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Existing Baychester (Boyle Ave Line)

Terminal

N

1000 FEET

1"=1000'±

CO-OP CITY

SELECTED TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES

SECTION 1

SECTION 2

SECTION 3

SECTION 4

SECTION 5

EDUCATIONAL PARK

SHOPPING CENTER

COOP CITY BLVD

BARTOW AVE

U.S. PIERMEAD AND BULKHEAD LINE

HUTCHINSON RIVER PARKWAY

BAYCHESTER AVE

THRUWAY

NEW ENGLAND

Terminal

SCHEME III (spur west of HR Pky)

SCHEME II (Boller Ave Spur)

alternate terminal

Vacant Land

SCHEME I (Terminal)

LAYUP

Existing 2-track NHRR Bridge

To Concourse Line

LEGEND

DWELLINGS

26 STORY

24 STORY

33 STORY

3 STORY

G GARAGE

FIGURE 2

CO-OP CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PARKSIDE
WAKEFIELD
EASTCHESTER
WOODLAWN
SETON FALLS PARK
EDENWALD
HOUSES
CO-OP CITY (U.C.)
BAYCHESTER
PELHAM BAY PARK
NORWOOD
WILLIAMSBRIDGE
WOODLAWN CEMETERY
MOSHOLU GOLF COURSE
BEDFORD PARK
BOTANICAL GARDEN
PELHAM WESTCHESTER
MORRIS
Transfer
Transfer
Historical Alignment
(Not Recommended)
Pass under, not over
Bronx Park.
POSSIBLE CONCOURSE LINE EXTENSION
TO CO-)P CITY

July 14, 1972

Col. John O'Neill
New York City Transit Authority
370 Jay Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Col. O'Neill:

Some time ago, I mentioned that we had put together some material on possible rapid transit extensions to Co-op City. While we never completed that effort, I am sending you a copy in its present state because some of it may be useful in your study. I think the UMTA Technical Study will provide an excellent opportunity for the TA to put together a first class report that will show assorted consultants what the TA really can do.

I personally still have some reservations on extending the 2 Ave to Co-op City via the New Haven in spite of its apparent easy physical feasibility. The line would pass through a low density area and I wonder what its traffic potential really is.

Aside from Parkchester, there is no major intermediate traffic generator and only a corner of Parkchester is tapped. There is a large hospital complex that should be served, but the numbers of people involved is probably low (like 96th St & 2 Ave). Co-op City itself can't be served well unless Co-op City is penetrated, otherwise the line is no more accessible to most of Co-op City than the present Baychester Ave station of the Dyre Ave line. So if a feeder bus system is needed to get to the New Haven, one could easily ask, why bother, let the bus system focus on the Dyre Ave line instead. Some of these points, and suggested station locations are discussed in my

write-up. Anyway, using the NH is probably better than using the Pelham line.

I discuss the Concourse extension as one alternative. While this alternative is probably the least likely to be adopted, it is the one I personally prefer because I think its crosstown route across the northern Bronx will do more for the Bronx than any of the other, but less costly, schemes.

In regard to the Concourse extension alternative, I suggest a new route be studied which is different than the historical Burke Ave route. The Burke Ave route was laid out about 1930 long before the City acquired the Dyre Ave line. In order to provide a traveler with the 2 Ave - Dyre Ave line and to enter Co-op City at a more logical place, Bartow Ave, I suggest a Burke Ave - Gun Hill Road - Bartow Ave alignment as a better one.

Trusting that the material will be of some use,

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert A. Olmsted
Transportation Planning Engineer

RAO/pm